



NEWS RELEASE

COUNCIL PRESIDENT SCOTT PETERS

First District

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Peters Asks Council to Set Aside Portion of Tourism Funds for Arts

SAN DIEGO -- Council President Scott Peters appeared before the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee today to request that they consider a change to the way TOT ("Transient Occupancy Tax") dollars are allocated. The proposal was forwarded on a 4-0 vote to the full City Council for consideration this fall.

Peters's proposal includes a change to the City's Municipal Code to require that 3% of money received from the existing 10.5 cent tourist tax be set aside for tourism promotion, and that 1% of that money be used specifically to promote arts and culture beginning in 2010. This proposal would not increase the tourist tax nor divert any additional monies from the General Fund.

The Transient Occupancy Tax is assessed on hotel, motel and car rental charges in the City of San Diego to support tourism efforts. Currently, the Municipal Code allocates 4% of TOT funds for tourism promotion, with no specific formula for arts promotion. Peters expressed concern that arts organizations were not receiving the funds they deserve. A presentation by the City's Independent Budget Analyst confirms that funding for arts promotion has dropped from the equivalent of one cent of TOT allocations in FY 2003 to a half-cent by FY 2009.

"San Diego's vibrant arts scene draws visitors to our region from California, Mexico and beyond," Peters said. "These organizations deserve a portion of revenues generated by those visitors. By establishing a formula for arts promotion in the Municipal Code, we will ensure the continued success of the many arts and culture organizations that contribute so much to our economy and our quality of life."

Also testifying in support of the proposal were Colette Carson-Royston, Chair of the Commission for Arts and Culture; Robert Gleason, Arts and Culture Commissioner; DaLounge Smith, President CEO San Diego Youth Symphony and Steven Litman, member of the Regional Arts and Culture Coalition and Managing Director of the La Jolla Playhouse.

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